

A NEW SNAKE *PSAMMOPHIS TRITICEUS* FROM
BALUCHISTAN.

BY

MAJOR F. WALL, I.M.S., C.M.Z.S.

In Volume XX of this Journal (p. 1033), I remarked upon the collection of snakes in the Quetta Museum which had been submitted to me for identification.

Under the title *Psammophis schokari* I showed good reason to suppose that I had included two distinct species. This opinion is confirmed by the receipt of two more specimens from the Honorary Secretary, McMahon Museum, Quetta. It does not conform to the description of any other *Psammophis* in Mr. Boulenger's Catalogue, and I propose to name this new species *triticeus* on account of its wheaten colour.

The new species differs from *schokari* in having (1) fewer subcaudals, (2) three supralabials touching the eye, (3) the scales reducing posteriorly to 13 instead of 11, (4) in its markings, (5) probably its size (though on this point I cannot speak positively), and (6) finally and most important, its dentition.

I have now seen six specimens, and have been permitted to retain one from which I have obtained a skull preparation. The lengths of the two specimens now before me are $20\frac{3}{4}$ " and $24\frac{1}{2}$ ", the tails, respectively, 5" and $5\frac{1}{2}$ ". My largest *schokari* is 46", the tail $16\frac{1}{8}$ ".

Description.—*Rostral* touches 6 shields, the sutures subequal. *Internasals*—A pair, the suture between them three-fifths, that between the præfrontal fellows, rather less than the internaso-præfrontals. *Præfrontals*—A pair, the suture between them one-third greater than the præfronto-frontal, in contact with internasal, postnasal, loreal, præocular and frontal. *Frontal*—Touches eight shields, the fronto-supraoculars four or five times the length of the fronto-parietals. *Supraoculars*—Length equal to frontal, breadth two-fifths greater than the middle of frontal. *Nasals* divided; the posterior nasal is again divided into two superposed parts, touch the 1st and 2nd labials. *Loreal*—One, elongate, as



Psammophis triticeus
juv.
(nat. size).

Psammophis
schokari.
(nat. size).

long as the nasals. *Preocular*—One, touching the frontal. *Postoculars*—Two. *Temporals*—Two. *Supralabials*—9, the 4th, 5th and 6th touching the eye. *Infralabials*—6, the 6th largest, and in contact with two scales behind. *Sublinguals*—Two pairs, the posterior longer and in contact with the 5th and 6th infralabials. The snout is one-third longer than the horizontal diameter of the eye. *Costals*—Two headlengths behind head 17, midbody 17, two headlengths before vent 13. In the reduction of rows first the 3rd above the ventrals is absorbed into the row above or below; then the uppermost is absorbed into the vertebral. *Ventrals*—177 to 186. *Anal* divided. *Subcaudals* 75 to 88.

Colour.—Wheaten. A series of small black sub-apical short streaks on the sixth row above the ventrals, on the lower part of the 7th and upper part of the 5th rows. The interrupted formal

stripe thus formed begins on the neck as a continuation of the supraocular head stripes, and ends at the base of the tail. A greyish costal stripe involving the upper two-thirds of the last row, the penultimate, and the edge of the third row begins in the lore, passes behind the eye and extends down the body to the tail tip. A buff stripe intervenes between the two stripes above mentioned, and a second buff stripe involves the lower third of the last row, and the edge of the ventrals. In some specimens there is only a series of subapical spots on the 6th costal row, and no other stripes. There are three longitudinal dark stripes on the head, the median ending before nape. On the chin there are three stripes, one median, and two lateral, one on each lower lip, all being joined on the mental shield. There is also some central mottling on many of the gular scales, and on the anterior ventrals.

The dentition is as follows :—

Maxillary.—In front 5 small teeth, the first 3 increasing in size; then a gap which is succeeded by 8 progressively diminishing teeth, and finally 2 enlarged and grooved teeth. *Palatine*—10 to 11 subequal. *Pterygoid*—14 to 15 subequal. *Mandibular*—25 to 26, the first 4 or 5 increasing in size, after which the succeeding teeth progressively diminish in size.
